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General Assembly

Seventieth session

Official Records

83rd plenary meeting
Friday, 22 January 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Alyemany (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/70/722)

The Acting President: In keeping with established practice, I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/70/722, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that 15 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/70/722?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict

Note verbale dated 2 December 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Angola to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the report of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (A/70/596)

Draft resolution (A/70/L.40)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Angola to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.40.

Mr. Campos (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I would like to express Angola's gratitude to you, Sir, for convening this plenary meeting to consider agenda item 33, "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict". It is indeed a great honour for me to address the General Assembly today and to reaffirm my country's commitment to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

In 2003 in Kimberley, South Africa, the international community took action to curb the trade in conflict diamonds by establishing a unique international scheme bringing together Governments, the diamond industry and civil society. Those actions culminated in the establishment of the Kimberley Process, which Angola has supported since its creation. The Kimberley Process is a unique multi-stakeholder approach in which Governments, the diamond industry

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and civil society work together to monitor and control the rough diamond trade, and which is now a model for other efforts to combat natural-resource-based conflict. The Kimberley Process demonstrates that, when Governments work together with the private sector and civil-society organizations, they can ensure that the legitimate trade in diamonds helps countries reduce poverty, promote transparency and economic development, combat smuggling and money laundering, and meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

The date of 31 December 2015 marks the end of Angola's term as Chair of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. We are pleased to hand over the chairmanship of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme to the United Arab Emirates. Angola also welcomes the Commonwealth of Australia as Vice-Chair for 2016.

Pursuant to resolution 69/136, I wish to present to the General Assembly the report on the implementation of the Kimberley Process (A/70/596, annex) and, in my capacity as Chair for 2015, to also introduce draft resolution A/70/L.40, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts".

The report and the draft resolution to be adopted today reflect the substantial progress and momentum this important Process achieved during 2015. The draft resolution addresses the need to break the link between the illicit trade in rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to the prevention and settlement of conflicts. The contribution of the Kimberley Process is fundamental in that regard and is therefore deserving of the full support of the General Assembly. Angola is pleased to report that the Kimberley Process is effectively responding to the mandate it was given by the General Assembly to combat the role of diamonds in fuelling armed conflict.

The draft resolution reflects the work done to date, and I am very grateful for the support it has received. The sponsors of the draft resolution are Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by acclamation today, as it has in previous years.

The draft resolution contained in document A/70/L.40 is based on the previous resolution 69/136 and on the final communiqué adopted by all members by consensus at the plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process, which took place in Luanda, Angola, on 20 November 2015. The draft resolution before us represents the outcome of the negotiations and compromise reached during informal consultations. The relevant points of the draft resolution are as follows.

It welcomes the proposals for an international certification scheme for rough diamonds developed in the Kimberley Process, which provide a good basis for the international diamond-control mechanism that we all envision. It recognizes that the proposed international certification scheme could help ensure the effective implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions containing sanctions on the trade in conflict diamonds. It increases the transparency and accuracy of statistics. It promotes prerequisites for cross-border Internet sales. It promotes inclusiveness by broadening the level of involvement by Governments, regional organizations, the diamond industry and civil society in the Kimberley Process. It expresses appreciation to Swaziland, the European Union, the United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Armenia and the Republic of the Congo for having received review visits in 2015. Furthermore, it welcomes the commitment of those countries to continuously opening their certification system for reviews and improvements, and calls upon all participants to invite and receive review visits, in accordance with the peer review system of the Kimberley Process.

It expresses appreciation for the fact that a review visit was conducted in Côte d'Ivoire, as per Security Council resolution 2153 (2014). It encourages the Friends of the Mano River Union to continue providing support to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone for the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, as well as for its continued participation in regional cooperation and law-enforcement activities. Lastly, it takes note of the measures adopted by the Central African Republic's authorities and follow-up committee and the Kimberly Process monitoring team, which are consistent with the terms of reference of the team to implement the administrative decision on the resumption of exports of

rough diamonds from the Central African Republic, as approved through a written procedure on 17 July 2015.

In recent years, the Kimberley Process has made significant strides in the fulfilment of its mandate. However, it still faces several challenges. In that regard, the ongoing efforts of Governments, the diamond industry and civil society are necessary to maintain and improve the internal control mechanisms of all participating countries and strengthen the system to eliminate the flow of illicit rough diamonds in the international market.

As far as the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair is concerned, the plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process in Luanda has enabled us to continue to improve the rules and procedures in order to reach a consensual position on the matter. Having said that, the plenary has elected the United Arab Emirates as Chair and the Commonwealth of Australia as Vice-Chair of the Kimberley Process for 2016.

Moreover, following the lifting of the embargo by Security Council resolution 2153 (2014), a group of the monitoring team, represented by several member countries and led by the Republic of Angola, conducted a review visit to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. The results of the visit were positive, thus enabling the country to resume the export of its rough diamonds. Also, it is pertinent to emphasize that the review mission that took place in the Central African Republic, and that was conducted by the Kimberley Process participants and observers and led by Angola, has enabled the resumption of rough-diamond exports from the compliance zones through an administrative decision adopted in July 2015. The two steps just mentioned represent tremendous progress and prove the essence of the Kimberley Process, which is to allow the marketing of diamonds exploited legally under the auspices of legitimate Governments, and prevent the introduction of diamonds mined by rebels into the international market.

As representatives may be aware, the Kimberley Process remains open, global and non-discriminatory to all countries and regional economic integration organizations willing and able to fulfil its requirements. In that regard, countries continue to apply to and join the Kimberley Process. During the past year, we received requests from Mozambique, Gabon and Liechtenstein. Furthermore, the Kimberley Process has made special efforts to fully reintegrate the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which will receive a review mission in the first quarter of 2016. It is the desire of the Kimberley Process to see the widest possible participation. To that end, it continues to engage and encourage countries to join and be integrated in the Process.

Finally, I wish to thank all representatives again for contributing to the discussions and supporting the draft resolution, and I ask the Assembly to take note of the annual report on the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, as well as to adopt the proposed draft resolution. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to all participants, in particular the Chairs of the working groups and committees of the Kimberly Process, for the support they have given to Angola during its chairmanship of the Process. I trust that the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair will enjoy the same support.

Angola looks forward to working with the 2016 Chair, as well as with all Kimberley Process participants and observers, in promoting greater cooperation within the Organization.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Parenti (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The European Union and its member States, which act as a single participant in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, would like in the first place to commend the Republic of Angola for its successful chairmanship of the Kimberly Process, and to welcome the results that have been achieved insofar as they illustrate the important efforts deployed to continue strengthening the Kimberley Process and to confront the challenges of the future.

As Chair of the Kimberley Process Working Group on Monitoring, the European Union has actively contributed to strengthening the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and encourages participants to continue committing themselves to enhanced scrutiny through Kimberley Process peer review visits, as well as to substantive annual reports. The EU would in particular like to express appreciation to Swaziland, the United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Armenia and the Republic of the Congo for having hosted review visits in 2015 and to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Norway, Togo, Cameroon, Panama and Ghana, as well as Belarus and Brazil, the Lao People's

Democratic Republic, Mauritius and Venezuela, for having invited review visits in 2016, noting that the administrative decision on peer review calls for all Kimberley Process participants to host a review visit every three years.

We firmly believe that the consistent use of those implementation tools will strengthen the ability of the Kimberley Process to tackle illicit trade in conflict diamonds and call on all participants to step up efforts in that respect. The EU welcomes the commitment of the Process participants and observers to considering relevant recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force report related to risks in the diamond-supply chain and engaging directly with the authors of the report in the context of ongoing efforts to further strengthen the implementation of the Certification Scheme.

The EU welcomes the efforts of the Central African Republic to further implement its work plan and road map for strengthening the internal control system. The EU takes note of the steps taken by the Central African Republic's Follow-Up Committee and the Kimberley Process Monitoring Team, consistent with the Team's terms of reference for implementing the administrative decision on resumption of exports of rough diamonds from the Central African Republic, as approved through written procedure on 17 July 2015. The EU also welcomes the Central African Republic's Process authorities' commitment to continuing to implement the administrative decision and share any relevant information and data with the Kimberley Process Monitoring Team, as well as to hosting a field mission to diamond-producing areas as soon as possible in order for the Process to verify the situation on the ground, with a view to validating the country's proposal for determining compliant zones from which the export of rough diamonds could resume.

Furthermore, the European Union welcomes the recent steps taken by the Mano River Union (MRU) countries — Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone — to create a new impetus for further regional cooperation in compliance with the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, an initiative highlighted by the Security Council in resolution 2153 (2014), which lifted the embargo on the export of rough diamonds from Côte d'Ivoire. The European Union especially welcomes the continuous support for the MRU countries provided by the technical team of the Working Group on Monitoring and for the Friends of the MRU group, in particular the ongoing efforts undertaken to formalize the role of the MRU secretariat and involve other implementing partners and technical assistance providers.

In 2015, the international community demonstrated its determination to act collectively and constructively through the Kimberley Process as a valuable instrument for preventing diamonds from fuelling conflicts and for ultimately contributing to economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. In that context, the EU welcomes the commitment of the Process to implementing the Washington Declaration on integrating development and artisanal and small-scale diamond mining in the Kimberley Process.

The EU welcomes the fact that in recent years the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme has successfully succeeded in assisting Governments in responding to new situations of conflict and violence. We strongly support the efforts of the Kimberley Process to evolve and adapt in order to meet future challenges in the global diamond-supply chain and provide assurance to consumers that diamonds are not tainted by violence.

Before I conclude, I would like to stress that one of the unique features of the Kimberley Process is its tripartite structure. Both industry and civil society are essential elements of the Kimberley Process and have contributed much to its establishment and operations. In this respect, the European Union calls on all participants and observers to recognize the full diversity of opinions within the Kimberley Process and continue working together to further enhance the scheme's credibility. In particular, we rely on a close working relationship with all our partners in the civil society coalition to ensure that the Kimberley Process remains an effective tool for peacebuilding and conflict prevention, to monitor the efficacy of the Kimberley Process in diamond-mining communities across the globe and to continue to challenge us to do more and do better. We will continue to rely on that relationship to ensure the Process remains an effective tool in the future.

The European Union would like to again express its gratitude to the Republic of Angola for its stewardship of the Process this year. We now welcome the United Arab Emirates as the incoming Kimberley Process Chair and express gratitude for its vision as the 2016 Chair to further strengthen the implementation of the Certification Scheme and to ensure that the trade in rough diamonds is used for the benefit of all people.

We welcome and support the commitments that the United Arab Emirates has made for its chairmanship, and we would encourage the country to further engage with the Civil Society Coalition in order to further strengthen the Kimberley Process, including in the areas of valuation and enforcement cooperation. The European Union looks forward to working closely with the United Arab Emirates to bring renewed impetus and strength to the Kimberley Process.

Mr. Roet (Israel): Like others, I would like to thank Angola for its able chairmanship in 2015 and wish the United Arab Emirates great success in assuming the chairmanship this year.

All too often, we meet here in this Hall to discuss intractable challenges and missed opportunities. Today I am very pleased to say that we have come together as an international body to mark an extraordinary accomplishment. For decades, the dark underworld of the diamond industry operated in the shadows. In fact, the glimmering light of diamonds, prized for their clarity, blinded us from the truth that these diamonds were being used as tools of warfare and served as financial lifelines for ruthless warlords. Unbeknownst to most of us, the very diamonds being used to mark the beginning of lifelong relationships were often obtained under the most horrific human conditions, marked by the ending of countless lives.

From the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Angola and from Liberia to Sierra Leone, these so-called blood diamonds allowed warlords to usurp power from legitimate Governments and led to the enslavement and death of untold numbers of innocent men, women and children. Finally, 12 years ago, the world declared in a unified, crystal-clear voice — one could even say a diamond-clear voice — that enough was enough.

The magnitude and cruelty of the atrocities stemming from the illegal trade of diamonds led the international community — an alliance of Governments, leaders of industry and civil-society representatives — to establish a unique international scheme that requires States to regulate their diamond production and trade through a stringent system of Government certification. By doing so, the international community has been able to exclude blood diamonds from entering into the stream of international trade.

In the past few years, we have seen numerous achievements. These include the strengthening of the implementation of the peer-review system, the enhanced transparency and accuracy of statistical measurements, and the increasing involvement by various stakeholders in the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme. Thanks to a concerted global commitment equally matched by global action, 99 per cent of all diamonds sold today are certified conflict-free, which guarantees that diamond revenues are appropriately used for economic growth and sustainable development. The Kimberly Process is therefore directly contributing to the promotion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals are met for all people in all places while leaving no one behind. As we embark on the long road of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the accomplishment of the Kimberley Process has proved yet again that, as a family of nations, if we put our differences aside and unite, we can make a difference and be a positive force in improving our world.

As the world's leading exporter of diamonds and the host to its third-largest trading centre for diamonds, Israel was one of the first countries to raise awareness about conflict diamonds, one of the first countries to play a part in establishing the Kimberley Process, and the first country to issue a certificate when the Process went into effect in 2003. During its 2010 Kimberley Process chairmanship, Israel initiated the establishment of a sub-working group on trade facilitation and oversaw the membership process for four new countries.

Israel strongly reaffirms the importance of the tripartite nature of the Kimberley Process. Civil society must be fully involved in the Process, particularly in monitoring the implementation on the ground. The Kimberley Process must also enhance collaboration with diamond-industry associations, international organizations and enforcement agencies. All of those stakeholders benefit from the open exchange of information and access to it.

Millions of people, from small-scale miners to heavy equipment operators and from cutters to retailers, all rely on the diamond trade for their livelihoods. When managed and traded responsibly, legally mined diamonds can serve as a catalyst in improving and accelerating the standard of living of millions. We therefore have a duty, a duty to the miners who depend on diamonds for their livelihoods and a duty to demonstrate to nations blessed with natural resources that prosperity can replace poverty. We also have a

duty to future generations to ensure that cooperation triumphs over conflict.

I will end by wishing us all *mazel* and *bracha*, Hebrew for "good fortune" and "blessing", as is traditionally said in the diamond industry all around the world to mark the successful close of a diamond transaction.

Mr. Nkoloi (Botswana): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this annual briefing and for giving my delegation the opportunity to contribute to the debate on it. At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation and gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Angola for its expert leadership as Chair of the Kimberley Process for 2015. We commend Angola for its leadership and engagement throughout the year and for ensuring that the report of the Process (A/70/596, annex) reached the Assembly.

My delegation attaches great importance to this agenda item, not only because it seeks to protect the legitimate trade in diamonds, but also because it symbolizes the international community's resolve to individually and collectively do its part to ensure that never again will resources such as diamonds bring sorrow and suffering to humankind.

As one of the founding members of the Kimberley Process and a country that is heavily dependent on these precious stones, Botswana attaches enormous importance to the ethical exploitation of and legitimate trade in rough diamonds. The regulation of the diamond trade through the Process has seen both success and challenges over the years. The Process requires that its members adhere to high standards in order to be able to certify that shipments of diamonds entering and leaving their territories are legitimate. Participating States must meet minimum requirements, which include establishing national legislation and institutions, as well as export, import and internal controls, and committing to transparency and the exchange of statistical data.

Complementing the efforts of the Kimberley Process and its oversight of rough diamonds, today's annual draft resolution (A/70/L.40) and other United Nations resolutions continue to prevent links, and break them, between the illegal trade in rough diamonds and armed conflict. They reaffirm the Process as the international vehicle supporting that cause and welcome its continued role in regulating the diamond trade. That is why my delegation continues to support the Process's principles and objectives and its Certification Scheme, as it works to eliminate illicit rough diamonds from the legitimate diamond market and prevent such illegal transactions from promoting armed conflict and unlawful activities that threaten international peace and security.

Informed by its long-term national interests and an overall strategic vision aimed at using ethical means to harness its natural capital, Botswana has believed since diamonds were first discovered in the idea of using them to do good to the benefit of its people, while promoting socioeconomic development. For that reason, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the integrity of the diamond industry and preserving its wealth for posterity. As Botswana's former President Festus Mogae once said a decade ago,

> "For our people in Botswana, every diamond purchase represents food on the table, better living conditions, better health care, potable and safe drinking water, more roads to connect our remote communities and much more".

In short, for Botswana, diamonds are for development, period. There is a direct correlation between diamond revenues and food on the table, as well as education for the young, since the diamond industry accounts for more than 40 per cent of the Government of Botswana's revenue. Through it we enhance our prospects for achieving our development goals, including the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). With a proven track record and a tradition of judicious management of our natural capital, we continue to learn while sharing our experiences and best practices with the Kimberley Process family. Consistent with the ideals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, we would like to once again reiterate our strong support for and faith in the Kimberley Process and to request that the issue remain on the Assembly's agenda in order to ensure that we continue to curb and right the wrong of those who still believe in using diamonds to harm humankind.

Today the international community, and especially the African continent, with its Agenda 2063, has shifted its attention to entrenching a culture focused on inclusivity, sustainable development and silencing the guns. It is our wish and dream to see post-conflict countries make a priority of investing in people-centred development for sustainable livelihoods. My delegation

remains confident that through joint efforts such as the Kimberley Process initiative, we will continue to ensure that, more than ever, diamonds become a major source of financing for economic development, not a catalyst for civil wars.

In conclusion, Botswana welcomes the Kimberley Process plenary's endorsement in Angola of the United Arab Emirates' assumption of its Chair for 2016, and the selection of the Commonwealth of Australia as Vice-Chair. We wholeheartedly congratulate the United Arab Emirates on its new role and pledge our full support and cooperation to it in its discharge of its mandate.

Mr. Almazrouei (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting. We would also like to express our thanks and gratitude to Angola, the outgoing Chair of the Kimberley Process, for its distinguished leadership, and with which as Vice-Chair we had the opportunity to work. We would also like to thank Angola for its hard work in facilitating and coordinating the negotiations on the draft resolution we will adopt today (A/70/L.40), which resulted in a text that we were able to adopt by consensus.

The United Arab Emirates joined the consensus on the draft resolution because we believe it is an important step in the consensus among all the stakeholders in the Kimberley Process, which will help to make the Process more effective and successful. The draft resolution reaffirms the resolve and commitment of all stakeholders to strengthening and implementing the Process in full. The United Arab Emirates is proud to have been chosen as the Chair of the Process for 2016, proof that our member countries believe in its abilities and have confidence that it can contribute effectively to implementing the Process at the international level. We would also like to congratulate Australia on its election as Vice-Chair and look forward happily to working with the Australian delegation in the coming year.

Our election makes us the first Arab country to have the honour of chairing the Kimberley Process. We began implementing the Process in 2003, becoming thus the first Arab country to adopt the Certification Scheme. Since then we have taken measures and initiatives that include enacting a federal law controlling imports and exports of rough diamonds and have instituted restrictions and regulations for the diamond trade, as a result of which the United Arab Emirates has become a leading centre for the world trade in diamonds.

As Chair of the Kimberley Process, we look forward to sharing our deep expertise with other members and will spare no effort to cooperate with the relevant Government bodies and civil-society organizations in order to propose new ideas and initiatives aimed at enriching the Process and enhancing collaboration among all stakeholders. That should help us to protect legitimate and legal trading and ensure that consumers can buy clear and conflict-free diamonds. The United Arab Emirates intends to host a large number of meetings and conferences for Kimberley Process members in Dubai in 2016, designed to enable us to fully understand the upgraded infrastructure that our country has instituted in this sector.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate the United Arab Emirates on its assumption of the chairship of the Kimberley Process for 2016.

(*spoke in English*)

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/70/L.40, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/70/L.40, and in addition to those delegations already listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Armenia, Canada, Switzerland, the United States of America and Viet Nam.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/70/L.40?

Draft resolution A/70/L.40 was adopted (resolution 70/252).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.